

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, February 10, 1932

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Adaptable Meals and a Lenten Menu." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletins available: "Food for Children," "Good Food Habits for Children."

If you've ever had the job of feeding a big family of varying ages, you know that it's a business with some problems attached. A friend of mine who has three children, a husband and a brother-in-law to feed described her difficulties to me this way:

"Planning meals? Don't tell me it's easy with a lot of different ages and tastes to consider. There's Father, who just must have his doughnuts, pie and coffee. There's Uncle Bill, who likes his pickles and his highly spiced food. There's my twelve-year-old Jack, growing like a tree, who seems to be perpetually hungry and needs quantities of wholesome food to fill him up. But Father's pie, Uncle Bill's pickles and Jack's large, hearty meals won't do at all for Peggy, aged five, nor for little Junior aged three. I was brought up to eat what was set on the table and be thankful. But you see, my mother had never heard of minerals and vitamins and all the other things that mothers today consider if they want strong and happy children. My mother never heard about that bugbear malnutrition. And frequent tummy aches she considered one of the natural events of childhood, trying, no doubt, but good discipline for her children's spirits."

Some mothers solve this problem of feeding youngsters and grown-ups by two sets of meals. They prepare a very simple meal for the youngsters. And then they fix another to suit the tastes of their elders of the family. But cooking two sets of meals is a heavy job and means doing double duty in the kitchen. Personally, I'm opposed to so much extra labor.

Other mothers, in order to be sure that their children have the right food, insist on feeding father day after day a diet of milk soup and the other dishes suitable for the small son at the table. This system has caused many a good father to leave home. A man who has a desire for pork chops and mince pie can't be happy indefinitely on poached eggs and spinach puree. Yet, there's no use going back to the old system, feeding the children everything and letting tummy aches have their way.

Well, there's the situation. How to meet it?

Compromise is the answer. For every busy mother, the slogan should be: "One menu for all." But that menu should be adaptable. The wise mother will plan meals that can be adjusted to suit the different needs of the different members of the family. Even dinner, the main meal of the day, can

suit the children as well as the man of the house, if it consists of wholesome food, simply prepared.

Whether the children are served at the dining table with the rest of the family or separately depends on which is best for them and easiest for their mother. In homes where the evening meal must be late, or where the noon meal is hurried, the children will undoubtedly be better off if they are served earlier than the rest of the family. But in either case, only one meal should be cooked for everybody.

Don't get the idea from this that I'm suggesting that the smallest members should eat exactly as the older ones do. Dear me, no. Start them in to understand from the first that they won't have every item on the bill of fare and that they'll have smaller servings than father or big brother. The earlier they learn that they don't have everything the grown-ups have, the easier the job of feeding will be both on them and their parents. This point of view is just a matter of training and habit.

Which reminds me to ask you if you have that leaflet about children's food habits. It contains many helpful suggestions. If you want a copy, just write me for Leaflet Number 42, called "Good Food Habits for Children." It's yours for the asking.

Also, if you want help on the problem of menu planning for children, you'll find the bulletin called "Food for Children" useful. There are a lot of good children's menus among its pages. And there are some fine recipes to go with the menus. Did I tell you the number of that bulletin? It's Farmers' Bulletin 1674. Just put your name and address and that number sixteen seventy-four on a postcard addressed to me or to the Dept. of Agriculture at Washington, D.C. and we'll see that you get a copy within a few weeks.

Requests are already coming in for lenten menus and dishes. According to my calendar this is the first day of Lent. So I suggest that this is a good time to send for the egg leaflet if you don't own one already. And take a glance through your green cookbook noting all the egg and cheese dishes suggested there as well as the recipes for cooking fish. During the coming weeks I'll try to give you some good dishes for this season.

Today we'll start the season with an oyster meal. Get down the soup bowls from the pantry shelf because the Menu Specialist is suggesting a delectable oyster stew for the main item of the meal. Oyster stew served with nice crisp little oyster crackers. The second item is a macaroni salad. Maybe you never heard of that kind of salad? Well, I've got this to say about it. It's different, it's good-looking and it's awfully good if it's made right.

Just a minute and I'll tell you how to make it.

For dessert, stewed apricots and raisins—a very good combination. Wash and soak the apricots overnight. Then put them on the stove in the water they were soaked in. Add the raisins and a little sugar, if you like. Then stew them gently until they are plump and tender.

R-H.C. 2/10/32

The salad? Drop the macaroni broken into short lengths into boiling salted water and cook it until it's tender--about twenty minutes, then drain it, run cold water through it, and let it become cold. For salad, you'll combine the cold macaroni with small cubes of sharp cheese, with chopped celery, sweet pickles and with either red pimento or green pepper. Cooked dressing is the best dressing I know for this salad. And it can stand quite a bit of seasoning, especially mustard. Serve the salad on crisp lettuce leaves.

Yes, I'll be glad to give you a recipe for the cooked dressing. There is a cooked dressing recipe in the green cookbook, but this one is simpler to make and less expensive.

If you'll take your pencils, I'll list for you the ten ingredients first.

2 teaspoons of salt	1/4 cup of sugar
1/4 teaspoon of mustard	1 pint of milk
1/8 teaspoon of white pepper	2 eggs
1/4 teaspoon of paprika	1/4 cup of butter or other fat, and
6 tablespoons of flour	3/4 cup of sugar.

There are the ingredients. I'll go over them once again. (Repeat)

Now, to make the dressing, you sift the dry ingredients first and mix them thoroughly. Then add the cold milk to them gradually and stir until well blended. Then cook in a double boiler until thick. Cover and cook ten minutes longer without stirring. Now beat the eggs until very light and then add some of the hot mixture to them gradually. Then combine and cook the whole mixture a few minutes longer. Now add vinegar slowly. Stir and continue to cook until thickened. Then add the butter or other fat, beat and set away to chill.

My plan was, as I told you yesterday, to talk about baby's bath today, but with all these urgent questions about food, I thought I'd better leave that chat on the baby until next week. Sometime early next week.

Tomorrow we'll talk about buying table linen, and I'll give you directions for making home made noodles.

